

March 20, 2019

To the Honorable Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

I am a resident of New Canaan, CT and I am writing you in opposition to Bill HB 7192, Sections 7-10, establishing a Commission on Shared School Services for the purpose of developing a plan for the redistricting or consolidation of school services and school districts.

1)Concern #1 –

This Commission is given the mandate to redistrict or consolidate school services AND school districts. The word "redistricting" and "consolidating" are repeated seven other times in section 7 to 10.

2)Concern #2 -

The bill does not say whether the Legislature will get to vote on the plan developed by the Commission.

3)Concern #3 –

The Commission consists of 14 members ALL appointed by the Leaders of the Legislature and the Governor (Line 450-477) and will exist for eight years until June 30, 2027 (Line 492). Parents and citizens alike will not have control in the formation of the Commission. Of the 14 members, only one member is required to be a parent of a student enrolled in a public school. Therefore, the views of parents will not be adequately represented in this composition. The looming protracted uncertainty is very detrimental to our local economy.

4)Concern #4- the bill does not say whether the incentives, grants or tax changes will be forced/coerced or voluntary.

5)Concern #5 – the bill does not specifically indicate what threshold will be used to determine which districts will be consolidated: under 2,000 students? Under 40,000 residents? This again creates a great deal of uncertainty.

6)Concern #6 - The bill says that shared and consolidated services includes but is not limited to administrative functions. This leaves this committee with great deal of latitude in its decision making on consolidation and regionalization.

Thank you,  
Marea Dumbauld  
New Canaan, CT